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Jottings from June: July 15, 2016

A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.

It has been hard to hold onto the concept of Jubilee since the end of the 50th Annual Meeting. There continues to be so much violence and grief in the world, so much suspicion and disrespectful rhetoric, so much speculation and analysis. And, thankfully, so many who gather in prayer and in peaceful solidarity to mourn and to wail and to encourage one another that we might be the light of God's love for all peoples in all places, regardless of our faith or our alliances.

How do we bring a word of hope in these dark times? I know many of our clergy colleagues are struggling with this question. How do we shine a light to draw communities closer and in alignment with common values of human dignity, respectful relationship, and peaceful interaction? I know many who are in the streets who are struggling with this same question.

And yet, there are all the pains and burdens of our everyday lives as we try to care for family and be responsible employees and employers and find the time to do all the things we are engaged in. How do we find the energy and the time and the will to witness to hope and transformation and to weep with our neighbors and talk to our children?

These are hard times as we are assailed with new acts of violence even as we remember the anniversaries of past acts that have harmed and killed others and have left their imprint on our collective psyche. The opening text is found in Jeremiah 31 and again in Matthew 2 when Herod killed the innocent children. Jeremiah 31 recounts the tragedies of a people and provides us a word of hope:

> *Thus says the LORD:*
> *The people who survived the sword found grace in the wilderness;*
> *when Israel sought for rest, the LORD appeared to him from far away.*
> *I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.*
> *I will turn their mourning into joy, I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow.*

Even as I continue my prayers and my public witness for change in the world, I pray that you and all those who are weeping may find comfort and community and blessing that we might be strengthened as people of God who know that even death cannot overcome God's love and mercy and justice.

UCC leaders: Peace must begin with us

Leadership of the United Church of Christ "distressed and haunted by the words of a man who shot and killed these officers" today released a pastoral letter after the second incident in just over a week where law enforcement officers in this country were targeted, shot and killed by a gunman.

Read the entire letter on the UCC website.

‹ Caring Community: July 15, 2016

Two Local Pastor Retirement Celebrations! ›

Upcoming Events

AUG
4
Thu
(http://www.secucc.org/news-

10:00 am SEC Staff Meeting @ Conference Office (http://www.secucc.org/event/sec-staff-meeting-2/?instance_id=141746)